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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

16 August 1957

STAFF MEMO: 40-57

SUBJECT : Extent and Implications of the Soviet-Yugoslav Rapprochement

1. The Khrushchev Tito meeting in Rumania on 1 and 2 August may have resulted in more of a rapprochement than either of the participants is as yet willing to admit. Yugoslav officials have repeatedly asserted that Tito has in no way conceded any of Yugoslavia's independence or ideological convictions and Belgrade has encouraged the impression that the new accord has again been accomplished only on the basis of an "agreement to disagree." Nevertheless, a compromise arrangement, one that does not involve any major concessions on either side but which is still one step beyond the 1956 understanding, may have been worked out in secret.

2. Such a compromise might involve, on the Soviet side, a renewed pledge to recognize genuine Yugoslav independence. This would not mean endorsement of Yugoslav sovereignty, ideological concepts

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er economic practices, but would imply that, while scarcely admissable elsewhere in the Bloc, Yugoslav "deviations" will be tolerated for Yugoslavia (Khrushchev, speaking extemporaneously in Prague last month, told the Yugoslavs to keep their precious workers councils if they wanted to, but not to expect applause from the Bloc). In addition, the Soviet Union may have committed itself to "encourage" the Satellites -- particularly Albania and Bulgaria -- to mind their manners and "make up" with Yugoslavia (there are some indications that this process is already underway).

1. The Yugoslavs, for their part, could have agreed at least temporarily to recognize (not endorse) the Bloc as it is -- i.e. as a Bloc. This in turn, would imply a Yugoslav willingness to end missionary activities in the Satellites* and a promise to cease specific pressures against individual Satellite leaders.** Belgrade presumably would not agree to either of these "concessions," however, unless it was assured -- as it probably was -- that the Bloc is evolving in the direction desired by Yugoslavia, i.e. toward Satellite

* As engaged in last summer and fall, particularly in Poland and Hungary.

** As once exerted against Rakosi. A Yugoslav promise to accept unpalatable Satellite leaders is not without precedent -- Belgrade apparently agreed to accept Hungarian leader Erno Gere just prior to last Fall's revolution.

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"equality" with the Soviet Union. (A Yugoslav spokesman recently told the American ambassador in Belgrade that his government is quite optimistic about the future of relations within the Bloc and expects improvements in the near future.)

4. The Yugoslavs may also have agreed to consider favorably the question of membership in some Bloc or "international" Communist organizations. Belgrade's position on this is not as inflexible as it sometimes maintains; it is willing, even anxious, to participate in such organizations if its fears concerning Soviet domination can be allayed. It has already become a CEMA observer and recent reports suggest that it may re-join the World Federation of Trade Unions (from which it was ousted in 1950). The Yugoslavs stoutly maintain that they will never enter into a revived Cominform, but their attitude toward an international Communist or "socialist" organization of broad membership and loose structure (which might devote itself only to the publication of a journal) may not be quite so negative.

5. Although the rapprochement may thus have gone beyond the agreement of last year, the motives for the accord appear to be the same. The ultimate Soviet aim apparently continues to be renewed

• It was Tito, after all, who first suggested to Stalin (in 1945) the founding of an international Communist organization to replace the defunct Cominform.

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Yugoslav membership in the Bloc. Moscow presumably foresees various stages in the gradual attainment of this aim, with each stage perhaps representing a specific Soviet accomplishment -- such as a Yugoslav agreement to participate in a loose revival of the Cominform. The timing of such a procedure and the extent to which the Yugoslavs are expected to surrender their independence when back in the Bloc would presumably depend largely on Yugoslav reactions; Moscow might ultimately settle for a Yugoslav status roughly similar to that of either present-day Poland or even Communist China.

6. Why the USSR feels that this is the most desirable course of action (instead of merely isolating Yugoslavia from the Bloc, as Stalin did) is presumably related to the change in the over-all Soviet outlook and reflects, among other things, de-Stalinization, peaceful coexistence, and the general campaign against the West. Moscow's apparent urgency since the Soviet Presidium shakeup in restoring good relations with Yugoslavia, however, may have merely been the result of Khrushchev's specific desire to achieve success in a personal policy that was highly controversial.

7. Yugoslav motives for seeking accord with the USSR are only in part practical (e.g. desire for Soviet economic aid). Probably more important are less tangible considerations. Belgrade, for

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example, does not enjoy its spiritual isolation from most of the socialist world. Its Communist missionary fervor cannot operate in a vacuum -- it must develop some measure of legitimate prestige and party contacts within as well as outside the Bloc if its influence is to be felt. Perhaps temporarily able to curb its desire to propagate its own brand of Marxism, it, nevertheless, probably hopes in the long run to become a powerful source of enlightenment for the entire Socialist camp. It may also feel that its power and global prestige (something of which Yugoslavs are apparently very conscious) will in the long run be enhanced by good relations with the USSR and by the emergence of Yugoslavia as an indispensable bridge between the two worlds.

8. If a sort of tactical quid pro quo has, in fact, been worked out between Yugoslavia and the USSR, the stability of the present rapprochement will presumably rest on firmer foundations than the 1956 accord. Discussion apparently has been on a relatively frank basis and Molotov is no longer in a position to hinder good relations. But the current mood in both countries rests to a large extent on unrealistic optimism -- a general belief in each country that its own tenets will ultimately -- and perhaps dialectically -- triumph. Further, because major obstacles admittedly remain unaltered,

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because Khrushchev is impulsive and Tito is something of a crusader and because any number of impendables could threaten the accord, the success of the current rapprochement is by no means assured.

9. Skepticism in both capitals is undoubtedly strong. The Yugoslavs still fear Stalinist influence in Moscow, the Soviet leaders -- legitimately -- still fear Yugoslav influence in the Satellites. Thus Belgrade is continuing its public emphasis on "equality," Moscow is maintaining its heavy pitch concerning Bloc unity. A feeling in Moscow that its recognition of Yugoslav independence is again having major repercussions in the other Satellites (regardless of what the Yugoslavs do), or a Yugoslav feeling that the USSR is not satisfactorily developing Satellite equality, would stimulate renewed discord. "Outside" events or agencies -- another Hungary, some Polish action or major changes on the world scene -- could also prove too much for the agreement. Unless further compromises can be worked out the long-run prospects for genuine rapprochement are slim. Violent discord need not arise, but relations may never go beyond the present fairly flimsy -- and uneasy -- rapprochement.


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10. Therefore, our most recent estimate* that the Yugoslavs "will seek opportunities to expand economic and political contacts with the Sino-Soviet Bloc" -- without, however, compromising their "independent foreign policy" -- appears to remain essentially sound.

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* NIE 31-57, "Yugoslavia's Policies and Prospects," 11 June 1957

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